Xcel Energy℠

414 Nicollet Mall
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401-1993

December 20, 2004

Robert Schroeder, Chair
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
658 Cedar Street, Room 300
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: HIGH BRIDGE GENERATING PLANT REPOWERING PROJECT
NOTICE: XCEL ENERGY INTENDS TO USE ALTERNATIVE SITING PROCESS

Dear Mr. Schroeder:

Northern States Power Company d/b/a Xcel Energy ("Xcel Energy") hereby provides notice to the Environmental Quality Board, pursuant to Minnesota Rules Part 4400.2000, subpart 2, that we intend to file an application for a Site Permit using the alternative procedures of Minnesota Rules Part 4400.2000 to 4400.2950 for the High Bridge Repowering Project.

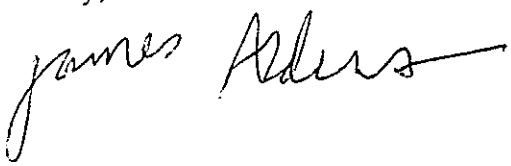
On March 8, 2004, Xcel Energy received approval from the Public Utilities Commission to implement three, plant conversion and upgrade projects in the metropolitan area to substantially reduce air emissions associated with electricity generation. One of the projects, at the High Bridge power plant site, consists of replacing the existing coal-fired plant with a new natural gas-fired, combined cycle power plant. The new plant will be located in what is now the coal yard and the existing plant will be decommissioned once the new plant is operational. The new plant will have approximately 500 megawatts of generating capacity.

The High Bridge repowering project falls within the definition of a "large electric power generating plant" under the Power Plant Siting Act and, thus, requires a Site Permit from the Environmental Quality Board. The project also qualifies for the alternative review process provided for in the Board's rules.

Xcel Energy will shortly file an application for a site permit as provided for in the alternative review rules, Minnesota Rules Part 4400.2000 to 4400.2950.

We look forward to working with the Board and your staff and stand ready to do whatever we can to facilitate your review of our proposal. Please call me at (612) 330 6732 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,



JAMES ALDERS
MANAGER REGULATORY PROJECTS

Cc: Alan Mitchell Manager Power Plant Siting Program